I urge the FCC repeal or modify 47 CFR 1.924(a) establishing the National Radio Quiet Zone, or NRQZ. The zone encompasses about 13,000 square miles in West Virginia, Virginia and Maryland. Telecommunications restrictions imposed by the NRQZ are a hazard to the safety and well-being of the 260,000 people who reside there.

NRQZ restrictions prevent local agencies from utilizing state-of-the-art technology to communicate with first responders, including police, firefighters and emergency medical technicians. This issue has prompted protests from 10 counties in West Virginia and Virginia, who are stymied by the NRQZ's virtual veto over technology they need to keep the public safe.

Restrictions on cellular telephone service imposed by the NRQZ have rendered much of the region a dead zone, leaving residents no way to call for help in emergencies if they have no access to a landline. I personally know one person who had to walk several miles after a vehicle breakdown to find someone with a landline phone so he could summon a wrecker. His cellular telephone was completely useless.

Although NRQZ restrictions may not have posed much of a problem nearly 70 years ago when the zone was created, in today's wirelessly connected world, they unfairly impact the safety and quality of life for citizens and make the region a less desirable place to live and do business. You can read about it here https://www.whsv.com/2024/10/25/augusta-county-joins-push-national-radio-quiet-zone-dissolution/ and here https://www.wvtf.org/news/2024-11-19/10-w-va-and-va-counties-are-asking-for-changes-inside-radio-quiet-zone

If the FCC opts not to eliminate the NRQZ altogether, the Commission should consider reducing it to a 10-mile radius of the Green Bank Observatory (NRQZ Zones 1 and 2) where the danger of interference is deemed the greatest. This would help alleviate some of the dangerous impacts on local citizens and the agencies that work to keep them safe.

Robert T. Hanley
Milam, WV